

Public Law 85-908
85th Congress, H. R. 9822
September 2, 1958

AN ACT

72 Stat. 1746.

To provide for holding a White House Conference on Aging to be called by the President of the United States in January 1961, to be planned and conducted by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare with the assistance and cooperation of other departments and agencies represented on the Federal Council on Aging; to assist the several States in conducting similar conferences on aging prior to the White House Conference on Aging; and for related purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "White House Conference on Aging Act".

White House
Conference
on Aging Act.

TITLE I—NEED FOR LEGISLATION; DECLARATION OF
POLICY; DEFINITIONS

NEED FOR LEGISLATION

SEC. 101. The Congress hereby finds and declares that the public interest requires the enactment of legislation to formulate recommendations for immediate action in improving and developing programs to permit the country to take advantage of the experience and skills of the older persons in our population, to create conditions which will better enable them to meet their needs, and to further research on aging because—

(1) the number of persons forty-five years of age and older in our population has increased from approximately thirteen and one-half million in 1900 to forty-nine and one-half million in 1957, and the number sixty-five years of age and over from approximately three million in 1900 to almost fifteen million at the present time, and is expected to reach twenty-one million by 1975; and

(2) outmoded practices in the employment and compulsory premature retirement of middle-aged and older persons are depriving the economy of their much needed experience, skill, and energy and simultaneously, depriving many middle-aged and older persons of opportunity for gainful employment and an adequate standard of living; and

(3) many older persons do not have adequate financial resources to maintain themselves and their families as independent and self-respecting members of their communities, to obtain the medical and rehabilitation services required to permit them to function as healthy, useful members of society, and to permit them to enjoy the normal, human, social contacts; and

(4) our failure to provide adequate housing for elderly persons at costs which can be met by them is perpetuating slum conditions in many of our cities and smaller communities and is forcing many older persons to live under conditions in which they cannot maintain decency and health, or continue to participate in the organized life of the community; and

(5) the lack of suitable facilities and opportunities in which middle-aged persons can learn how to prepare for the later years of life, learn new vocational skills, and develop and pursue avocational and recreational interests is driving many of our older persons into retirement shock, premature physical and mental deterioration, and loneliness and isolation and is filling up our mental institutions and general hospitals and causing an unnecessary drain on our health manpower; and

FROM YOUR CONGRESSMAN
JOHN E. FOGARTY
SECOND DISTRICT, RHODE ISLAND

(6) in order to prevent the additional years of life, given to us by our scientific development and abundant economy, from becoming a prolonged period of dying, we must step up research on the physical, psychological, and sociological factors in aging and in diseases common among middle-aged and older persons; and

(7) we may expect average length of life and the number of older people to increase still further, we must proceed with all possible speed to correct these conditions and to create a social, economic, and health climate which will permit our middle-aged and older people to continue to lead proud and independent lives which will restore and rehabilitate many of them to useful and dignified positions among their neighbors; which will enhance the vigor and vitality of the communities and of our total economy; and which will prevent further aggravation of their problems with resulting increased social, financial, and medical burdens.

DECLARATION OF POLICY

SEC. 102. (a) While the primary responsibility for meeting the challenge and problems of aging is that of the States and communities, all levels of government are involved and must necessarily share responsibility; and it is therefore the policy of the Congress that the Federal Government shall work jointly with the States and their citizens, to develop recommendations and plans for action, consistent with subsection (b) of this section, which will serve the purposes of—

(1) assuring middle-aged and older persons equal opportunity with others to engage in gainful employment which they are capable of performing, thereby gaining for our economy the benefits of their skills, experience, and productive capacities; and

(2) enabling retired persons to enjoy incomes sufficient for health and for participation in family and community life as self-respecting citizens; and

(3) providing housing suited to the needs of older persons and at prices they can afford to pay; and

(4) assisting middle-aged and older persons to make the preparation, develop skills and interests, and find social contacts which will make the gift of added years of life a period of reward and satisfaction and avoid unnecessary social costs of premature deterioration and disability; and

(5) stepping up research designed to relieve old age of its burdens of sickness, mental breakdown, and social ostracism.

(b) It is further declared to be the policy of Congress that in all programs developed there should be emphasis upon the right and obligation of older persons to free choice and self-help in planning their own futures.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 103. For the purposes of this Act—

(1) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare;

(2) the term "State" includes Alaska, Hawaii, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

TITLE II—WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON AGING

SEC. 201. (a) A White House Conference on Aging to be called by the President of the United States in January 1961 in order to develop recommendations for further research and action in the field of aging, which will further the policies set forth in section 102 of this Act, shall be planned and conducted under the direction of the Secretary

of Health, Education, and Welfare who shall have the cooperation and assistance of such other Federal departments and agencies as may be appropriate.

(b) For the purpose of arriving at facts and recommendations concerning the utilization of skills, experience, and energies and the improvement of the conditions of our older people, the conference shall bring together representatives of Federal, State, and local governments, professional and lay people who are working in the field of aging, and of the general public including older persons themselves.

(c) A final report of the White House Conference on Aging shall be submitted to the President not later than ninety days following the date on which the conference was called and the findings and recommendations included therein shall be immediately made available to the public.

Report to
President.

GRANTS

SEC. 202. (a) There is hereby authorized to be paid to each State which shall submit an application for funds for the exclusive use in planning and conducting a State conference on aging prior to and for the purpose of developing facts and recommendations and preparing a report of the findings for presentation to the White House Conference on Aging, and in defraying costs incident to the State's delegates attending the White House Conference on Aging, a sum to be determined by the Secretary, but not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$15,000; such sums to be paid only from funds specifically appropriated for this purpose.

(b) Payment shall be made by the Secretary to an officer designated by the Governor of the State to receive such payment and to assume responsibility for organizing and conducting the State conference.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

ADMINISTRATION

SEC. 301. In administering this Act, the Secretary shall:

(1) Request the cooperation and assistance of such other Federal departments and agencies as may be appropriate in carrying out the provisions of the Act;

(2) Render all reasonable assistance to the States in enabling them to organize and conduct conferences on aging prior to the White House Conference on Aging;

(3) Prepare and make available background materials for the use of delegates to the White House Conference as he may deem necessary and shall prepare and distribute such report or reports of the Conference as may be indicated; and

(4) In carrying out the provisions of this Act, engage such additional personnel as may be necessary (without reference to the provisions of the Civil Service Act) within the amount of the funds appropriated for this purpose.

22 Stat. 403.
5 USC 632 et seq.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

SEC. 302. The Secretary is authorized and directed to establish an Advisory Committee to the White House Conference on Aging composed of professional and public members, and, as necessary, to establish technical advisory committees to advise and assist in planning and conducting the Conference. Appointed members of such committees, while attending conferences or meetings of their committees or otherwise serving at the request of the Secretary, shall be entitled to receive compensation at a rate to be fixed by the Secretary but not

exceeding \$50 per diem, including travel time, and while away from their homes or regular places of business they may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons in the Government service employed intermittently.

TITLE IV—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Appropriations. SEC. 401. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as Congress determines to be necessary for the administration of this Act.

Approved September 2, 1958.